

## Mark Chapter Nine (Part Three) – Teaching Notes

**Introduction:** A key idea in Mark is that Jesus is the servant of God. Today, we hope to discussing Jesus' preview of rewards and Hell.

### **Body:**

#### **Read Mark 9:33-41**

**3. Of Rewards.** Jesus addresses the matter of being great or first. It takes humility and servant like spirit. Whoever welcomes one in the name of Jesus, welcomes Jesus and the Father who sent Jesus. Jesus goes on and teaches about how a person who is not against you is for you.

#### **Applications –**

- **Greatness.** Notice in vss. 34-35 that humble service is the path to greatness. The disciples were arguing about who would be the greatest. There is nothing wrong with wanting to be great on the Lord's program. In fact, the Bible shows us how to do it, because so many are interested in doing it. There is a right way and a wrong way. The wrong way is to make others look bad, so you can look good. The wrong way is to make shady deals that promote you, in exchange for some unkind deed. The right way to greatness is through humble service. The more we respond to the needs of people with humility, the more God will promote us. *Let's work on humble service, so we can be used by God to do great things for Him.* The purpose of being great is to do great things for the Lord. It is not being great for the sake of bragging rights.

- **Blessing those whom God has sent.** Notice in vss. 37, 41 that there is a blessing in blessing those whom God has sent. As being a blessing to the child or the disciple because of their association with Jesus leads to blessings in the text, the same is true today. It should be obvious why churches pay their Pastors well and give them special days like anniversaries. However, the principle holds true even for other staff and faithful volunteers like teachers, ministry managers, and follow-up workers. *Let's work on blessing those whom God has sent to us.* The blessing can be money, but it can also be kind words (i.e., verbal or written) or kind acts (e.g., going out to eat or inviting people over to eat).

- **Allowing what God allows.** Notice in vss. 38-41 that the disciples had stopped the good that God was allowing to happen. The disciples thought that if it was not being done under the direct control of Jesus or at least His disciples that it should not be done. The disciples were wrong in both their thinking and in their actions. First, God is the giver of every good and perfect gift. If any good is being done, God is involved. To stop the good is to be a party to stopping what God is involved in. Second, for a person to use Jesus' name makes it difficult to turn around and denounce or resist Him. This may be of more political advantage than any other advantage. Third, if the disciples had questions about the matter, they should have answered the questions, before they stopped the action. They stopped the good works without proper authority – seizure. *Let's work on allowing what God allows, instead of stopping everything that we don't control.* We don't have demonize every new church, new doctrine, or new activity. Good will find its way to the top and bad will sink to the bottom. /// As for the seizure, it is important for especially the church to find a balance between unauthorized activity and micro-management. Both impede or provide a challenge for greatness.

## Read Mark 9:42-50

**4. Of Hell.** Jesus talks about the danger of causing one of His people to sin, especially one of His little ones (i.e., young in age or faith). He talks about cutting off anything that causes one to sin. He closes with comments about salt and being at peace with others.

### Applications –

- **Not being a stumbling block.** Notice in vs. 42 that there is a grave danger in being responsible for causing or influencing others to sin, especially those who are considered to be Jesus' little ones (i.e., young in age or faith). Unfortunately, too many people help young people sin, by being a poor example of a Christian in front of them. It is sin to act saintly in worship and then gossip about people in front of young people after church. It is also sin to be mean towards newer members and those in need of help. *Let's work on being kind, instead of a stumbling block to others.* We should work on what our Church Covenant calls cultivating Christian courtesy.

- **Working on our sin problems.** Notice in vss. 43-48 the idea of cutting off that which leads to sin. The idea seems to be more figurative than literal. That is, one's eye really doesn't make one sin. It is how we think about what we see in our hearts and minds that really causes us to sin. Surely, we should work on looking less at what we know is a temptation to us. But to cut out our eyes so we cannot see neither the sunshine nor the temptation is not the teaching of the text. However, we are urged to do what needs to be done to deal with the sin in our lives. For some of us, we have to stop going certain places because of the temptation. Others have to stop hanging around certain people because of the temptation. *Let's work on doing what we have to do to stop sinning.* It has been my experience that substitution of good for the bad is easier than simply cutting off the bad. It is easier to drink diet coke with Christian friends than to simply say you are not going to get drunk at the club anymore. Replace the "thou shall not" with a "thou shall."

- **The terribleness of Hell.** Notice in vss. 44-48 that Hell is a terrible place. Saved people don't have to worry about going to Hell, because Jesus paid the price for our sins. However, just as parents can chastise their children without killing them, God can still punish us, without sending us to Hell. Life is challenging enough without God's punishment. As for those who are not saved, Hell is a place of eternal damnation and punishment. No matter how bad things may be in our lives, Hell is so much worse. And Hell will be just as hellish 100,000 years from now. *Let's do all that we can to help people get saved, so they don't have to go to Hell.* We can all at least invite and try to bring loved ones with us to church, so they can get connected to Christ. Many of us can learn "The Plan Salvation" well enough to explain it to others.

- **Being the salt of the Earth.** Notice in vss. 49-50 how salt is pictured. According to the Expositor's Bible Commentary, in vs. 49, we see salt pictured as some form of purifying trials and tribulations. Ryrie may be more accurate in seeing the salt as a symbol of that which preserves. In other words, people will be preserved by salt, so that they can be tormented in Hell forever. However, in vs. 50, we see the idea of salt as a preservative used in a different way. The disciples of Jesus are to be agents of preservation, in so doing they will have peace with one another. In other words, as the people of God remain salty and committed to the will of God, they will serve as a preservative of that which is good and a challenge to the decay and that which is bad, and they will have peace with one another. There is no verb for us to follow in vs. 49 other than do what we can to keep people out of Hell. However, *we should work on being the salt of the Earth,* which includes living according to God's word, which teaches us to love and be at peace with one another.

**Conclusion:** Let's work on being servants of God. God has much for those who obey His will.